PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO DESIGNATE FOR THE GENUS " SCOLOPENDRA " LINNAEUS, 1758 (CLASS MYRIAPODA) A TYPE SPECIES IN HARMONY WITH ACCUSTOMED USAGE

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The purpose of the present application is to ask the International Commission to use its Plenary Powers to designate for the genus *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758 (*Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) **1** : 637) (Class Myriapoda) a type species in harmony with accustomed usage and thus to prevent the appalling dislocation in the nomenclature of this group, a dislocation which would extend to the family name and ordinal-name levels, which would result if the normal provisions of the *Règles* were to be allowed to apply in the present case. The facts are set out briefly in the following paragraphs.

2. In 1758 Linnaeus recognised a single genus of chilopods, namely *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, to which he referred nine nominal species. Of these species, the third and fifth (both named on page 638) were *Scolopendra forficata* and *Scolopendra morsitans* respectively. Naturally, Linnaeus designated no type species. The first included species to be selected as the type species by a subsequent author was *Scolopendra forficata* Linnaeus which was so selected by Latreille in 1810 (*Consid. gén. Anim. Crust. Arach. Ins.* : 423, 112).

3. The foregoing type-selection for the genus *Scolopendra* Linnaeus is totally at variance with current usage, the species *Scolopendra forficata* Linnaeus being placed now (as shown in paragraph 4 below) in the family LITHOBIIDAE. In 1891 Pocock (*Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (6) **7** : 229) stated that *Scolopendra morsitans* Linnaeus, 1758, was the type species of *Scolopendra* Linnaeus. This statement was incorrect under the *Règles* in view of the prior action by Latreille in 1810, but it corresponded with the then well-established concept of the genus *Scolopendra*, a concept which has remained unchanged to this day. The genus *Scolopendra*, so interpreted, is the type genus of the family SCOLOPENDRIDAE, which was established by George Newport as long ago as 1844 (April 1944, *Proc. linn. Soc. Lond.* **1844**(20) : 192 ; [post-April] 1844, *Trans. linn. Soc. Lond.* **19** : 275).

4. In 1814 (Brewster's *Edinburgh Ency.* 7(2) : 408) Leach established a new nominal genus to which he gave the name *Lithobius*. Leach placed in this genus a number of species, including *Scolopendra forficata* Linnaeus, 1758. He did not designate a type species for this genus. The first author to select a type species was Latreille who in 1831 (*Cours d'Entomol. Ann.* **1** : 568) so selected *Scopolendra forficata* Linnaeus. This selection is in harmony with current usage, and this interpretation of the genus *Lithobius* forms the basis of

the currently accepted family LITHOBIIDAE Newport (G.), April 1844 (*Proc. linn. Soc. Lond.* **1844**(20) : 192 ; *id.*, [post-April] 1844, *Trans. linn. Soc. Lond.* **19** : 275, 360).

5. It will be seen from the particulars given in the preceding paragraphs that the generic names *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758, and *Lithobius* Leach, 1814, are objective synonyms of one another, that accordingly under the normal operation of the *Règles*, the name *Lithobius* Leach would disappear in synonymy, and the name *Scolopendra* Linnaeus would need to be used for the genus now universally known as *Lithobius*. Unless means can be found to preserve the name *Lithobius* for the group of species now universally associated with it, the most devastating changes will be involved, these changes affecting not only two generic names but also two family-group names and the names of two of the four chilopod Orders. In that event not only would the well-known family currently called the LITHOBIIDAE lose that name, but—and this would be even more confusing—would need in future to be known by the name SCOLOPENDRIDAE. In that event also the Ordinal name Lithiomorpha would disappear in synonymy. The genus now known as *Scolopendra* Linnaeus would probably have to be called by the name *Rhombocephalus* Newport, April 1844 (*Proc. linn. Soc. Lond.* **1844**(20) : 193 ; [post-April] 1844, *Trans. linn. Soc. Lond.* **19** : 275) and the corrected family-group and Ordinal names for this genus would probably become RHOMBOCEPHALIDAE and Rhombocephalomorpha respectively. In other words, one hundred and forty years of terminology, which has become widely established in general, as well as in technical, works and which involves names which have become tokens of the Chilopoda for naturalists, would be overturned.

6. The incorrect nomenclature currently in use has become so firmly entrenched in the literature over so long a period of years that nothing but confusion would result if an attempt were now to be made to apply the ordinary rules in this case. I therefore now ask the International Commission :—

(1) to use its Plenary Powers (a) to set aside all type-selections for the genus *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758, made prior to the Ruling now asked for, and (b), having done so, to designate *Scolopendra morsitans* to be the type species of the foregoing genus ;

(2) to place the under-mentioned generic names on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* :—

   (a) *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758 (gender : feminine) (type species, by designation under the Plenary Powers under (1)(b) above : *Scolopendra morsitans* Linnaeus, 1758) ;

   (b) *Lithobius* Leach, 1814 (gender : masculine) (type species, by selection by Latreille (1831) : *Scolopendra forficata* Linnaeus, 1758) ;

(3) to place the under-mentioned specific names on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* :—

  (a) *morsitans* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Scolopendra morsitans* (specific name of type species of *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758) ;

  (b) *forficata* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Scolopendra forficata* (specific name of type species of *Lithobius* Leach, 1814) ;

(4) to place the under-mentioned family-group names on the *Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology* :—

  (a) LITHOBIIDAE Newport, 1844 (type genus : *Lithobius* Leach, 1814) ;

  (b) SCOLOPENDRIDAE Newport, 1844 (type genus : *Scolopendra* Linnaeus, 1758).